1: Mi Mi Khaing 1-5 (no date) 1946 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

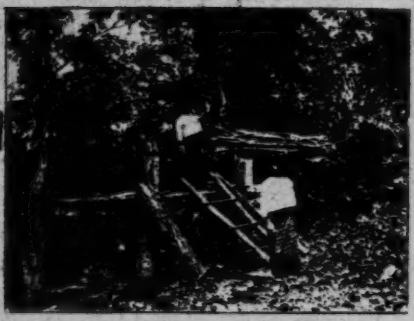
CHAPTER FOUR

BY the time that I was about four years old my father had become a Subdivisional Officer in the Civil Service, and our family had joined the ranks of what has now come to be known as the *min-kadaw* class, an *a-so-ya min* being a government official and *minkadaw* the wife of a *min*. The minkadaws usually referred to were in the great majority the wives of officials of the Burma Civil Service, Class II, and by the time that we were passing through our childhood and adolescent years they already formed a very definite stratum in Burmese society. We children now comparing notes with the children of the minkadaws posted as far apart as Tavoy and Myitkyina can find common characteristics in all the households, from domestic commodities and meal habits to social conventions and standards of wealth. It is as though a new upper middle class has grown up, complete with snobberies, in what was formerly a classless Burmese society, but a class that still keeps itself quite apart from the European gymkhana life of the district towns.

The houses which I can remember, when my father was a Subdivisional Officer in the subdivisional towns of Zigon and Myanaung where he was in charge of the subdivision, or in the divisional headquarters town of Magwe where the whole hierarchy of min from the Commissioner downwards were present, or in the district headquarters town of Maubin where the min ranked down from the Deputy Commissioner and my father was Headquarters Assistant, all bore certain uniform features. They were all wooden, two-storied and large, with a sufficient number of big rooms to have a dining-room and an office room below, a sitting-room above the portico and two big bedrooms, besides little verandahs and odd rooms. They all had a front staircase for common use and one or two ladder-like staircases behind for watermen, sanitation and servants. The kitchen was about 20 yards away, connected by a covered passage, and at the back of the large garden or compound was the *tanya*, a row of rooms for men servants and Indian servants. The garden in front was usually modest owing to frequent changes of occupants, but a minimum amount of flowers for daily vases on the altar had always to be cultivated, and fruit trees were prized highly, guava, mango, marian or citron.

Unlike most Burmese households we did not have any aunts or other relatives staying with us, but we had our full quota of domestic

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4



140. FETCHING IN FUEL.

In the villages the passing traveller is invited to join in the meal. Everyone in turn ladles gravy from the bowl on the rice in front of him and mixes and eats it with his fingers. Before and after eating, mouth and fingers are rinsed. After the meal a drink of water is taken. Fruit is eaten after meals and at odd times. The importation of delf crockery and enamelled ware has been going on for a long time.

Betel (*kun*) is taken at all times except at meals, and tobacco is smoked by men, women, and children (No. 21). The betel-box plays the same part in Burman sociality as the snuff-box still does in parts of Europe. The chew of betel is made up of the fresh leaf of the betel-vine (*kun-yuć*, No. 409) smeared with moist slaked lime (*thn*) and folded over slices of the nut of the areca or betel palm. Dried tobacco-leaf, cutch and spices—cinnamon and cloves—are frequently added. "A betel-chewing" is a common phrase for about a quarter of an hour. Old people who have lost their teeth pound up the betel in a small brass mortar (*kun-dyeik*) for chewing. The spittoon (*tuć-gan*) is indispensable.

The native tea is prepared by hill-tribes of the North. It is either in dry balls the size of a fist (*sin-chí*) or loose (*leppétchauk*), or is pickled (*leppékan*). The dry tea is infused in the Chinese fashion (*leppéyye*, No. 146).

When the platters have been rinsed after the evening meal and the tables put by—*sabaé-hmauk*—which gives the name to the hour, the day's work is over and the young women smarten themselves up to receive their *hmus*. The chief toilet-requisite is the face-powder (*thanakhá*)—the cream-coloured bark

141. GETTING FIRE BY THE NATIVE METHOD.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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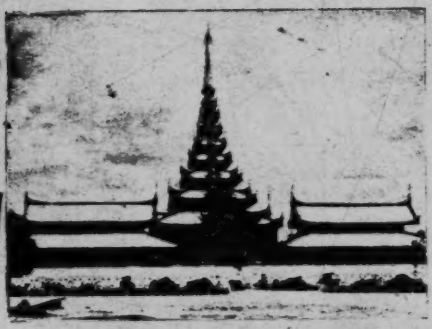

360. PALACE FRONT AND SPIRE.

The British administration preserves the native official machinery, from the *thadyt* to the *myoòk*, augmenting the numbers so as to reach every part of the area and curtailing the powers. Under native *régime* even *thadyts* might be *dâbaing*. The new *régime* takes account of the village *lûdyts* for the sake of their moral influence; many of them have been invested with power to compose differences up to small amounts, and some of the more prominent are honorary magistrates. Independent spirit is on the increase; the officials have to reckon with a new temper in the people. Nevertheless, in municipal councils the supineness and complaisance of the native members are calculated to stultify the position accorded to them. Road-making and sanitation do not arouse their interest, and the local excise, the matter they long to deal with, is excluded from their jurisdiction (*cf.* p. 157). The *thadyt* personally measures the fields, collects the land-tax and poll-tax from house to house, in such a circle as he can make the circuit of twice a year, and receives commission on the amount. He reports on matters within his circle. As many revenue-circles as a native magistrate can personally control are united into a township, under a *myoòk*, who at the same time supervises the co-ordinate grades of police distributed in the township. He publicly tries criminal and civil cases, under his powers as magistrate, by codes of law and procedure accessible to everybody. These codes form the most valuable models of system, in the vernacular, up to the present. By their help both judges and advocates have trained themselves in law. Five to eight townships, according to facilities for

361. BURMAN PRINCESS.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

644 on such occa-
sions the king appeared in the royal insignia, which otherwise only figure as
[643] emblems of state. The insignia in the illustration are surmounted by a queen's
crown (*sibbin*). The shape of a king's crown is seen in Nos. 151 and 425. There
[346] being but a single palace and thousands of *kyaungs* and temples, the palace
[344] appears to resemble a *kyaung*. But the converse is the fact; the *kyaung* it
643 is which in virtue of its religious character shares the distinction of the palace. The most recent style adopted by the Burman sovereigns was *Shin-Bayin*—Lord of Lords. A chief title was *Sinbyû Shin*—Lord of the White Elephant. Every subject prostrated himself in the presence of the king, with face averted from the effulgence of the royal countenance. An official called *thandawzin* used to repeat aloud the words uttered by the king. The ensign betokening the presence of the
[176] king and of the chief queen (*mibayâ*) is the *tibyû* (p. 101).
[532] Two to eight were borne according to the solemnity of the
[588] occasion. The chief queens were frequently half-sisters of the kings. For all the royal acts, the lying, rising, eating, speaking, there are euphemisms proper to the occasion; one of the most current of these is *shwepawdaw*—the golden foot. At his demise the sovereign is said to migrate to the abode of *nats* or delectable land; the staff of his *tibyû* was broken. The paraphernalia of the king's service were elaborate; but in his attitude to the *yahân* he comported himself as an ordinary man. The Royal White Elephant was maintained in great pomp; it ate and drank out of golden vessels and had
[231] a retinue for its service. An elephant really white—probably an albino—was captured in 1805, but was pampered so that it died. A second was captured in 1806 which lived for fifty years. Other "white elephants" kept for state have enjoyed their reputation in virtue of possessing certain assumed criteria of the "white" variety, as to the number of the toes, direction of the tail-tuft and other distinctions, without regard to the colour of the skin.

504. CARVED FIGURE OF RAT.

644 Change of capital at the accession of a new sovereign was characteristic of
633 Burman empire, even when there was no change of dynasty or other political convulsion. Events of the latter kind were no doubt the original reasons of such changes. Next to Pagán, Sagáing, on the right bank of the Irawadi, facing the flat and now desolate site of Ava, is the most impressive of the